



A USDI Bureau of Land Management Project



Inside this issue:

History of the Area	2
Planning Area Map	2
Planning Issues Summary	3
Purpose and Need	4
Steps in the Process	4
What Has Happened So Far?	5
Why Now?	5
Planning Criteria	6
Up Coming Events	6
We Would Like to Hear From You	8

Why a new management Plan is Needed?

Several significant changes have affected the Roan Plateau area in recent years. Some changes result from Congress providing new management direction for public lands in the Roan Plateau area. Other changes are occurring on surrounding and adjacent lands or within local communities. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) needs a new management plan to address these changes and you can help to craft that plan. This newsletter provides information about the Roan Plateau and the current planning efforts.

New guidelines for managing these lands, known as the Roan Plateau area outside the communities of Rifle and Parachute, Colorado, became necessary when Congress passed Public Law 105-85 in November 1997. That Congressional Act transferred administrative and management responsibility for approximately 56,000 acres from the Department of Energy (DOE) to the BLM.

The local BLM office with management responsibility for the Roan Plateau area is the Glenwood Springs Field Office (GSFO).

The Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) contains requirements that

direct BLM to develop management direction through a coordinated land use planning process on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law.

Before the transfer, BLM managed the Roan Plateau surface lands under a Memorandum of Understanding with DOE. Today, management activities affecting those lands must for the first time follow laws and regulations that apply to BLM instead of those that previously applied under the DOE administrative authority.

FLPMA provides an initial set of planning criteria that will guide the Roan Plateau planning effort. Several other laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), also apply and guide the input or participation that will occur throughout the process. Participation from members of local communities and others who may have an interest in the final plan is essential.

Land within the planning area is a mixture of publicly and privately owned land. The BLM planning area includes all lands, for analysis purposes, out of recognition that BLM planning decisions may affect these lands and the ac-



tivities that occur there, as well as possibly being affected by activities on neighboring lands. Several laws require the planning effort to address indirect and cumulative effects of potential decisions, including reasonably foreseeable effects on adjacent or nearby lands, people, and wildlife. However, the planning process will make decisions for only BLM managed public lands.

While the 1997 transfer is the principle reason for updating the GSFO Resource Management Plan, (RMP) several related questions must be addressed. These include oil and gas leasing, interim travel designations, new information from a recent inventory of wilderness character and roadlessness, new information from recent land health assessments, and the need to address changing uses on surrounding public lands.

Where to Get Information.
Website:
www.co.blm.gov/gsra/roanplateau.htm
The Glenwood Springs Field Office of the BLM has "fact sheets" on specific topics. you can contact the GSFO at:
(970) 947-2840

A Brief History of the Roan Plateau



Grazing continues to be a part of the management activities on the Plateau.

The Roan Plateau is a geologic uplift extending from north of Parachute, Colorado, to north of Rifle, Colorado. Some residents in the local communities also consider the Roan Plateau to extend west to the border with Utah.

The Roan Plateau planning area extends west from State Highway 13, north from the Colorado River, east from Parachute Creek, and south from the Rio Blanco - Garfield County lines, all within the state of Colorado. The uplands form the actual Roan

Plateau and the remaining land is the balance of the Roan Plateau planning area.

The Roan Plateau has been a part of the human experience for a long time. A 1995 survey conducted for DOE revealed over 100 sites with notable cultural, historical, and paleontological materials. Based on sources cited in that report, Native Americans of the Ute Tribe raised horses on Roan Plateau prior to European settlement, a practice that led to the Roan Plateau name. Remnants of that herd

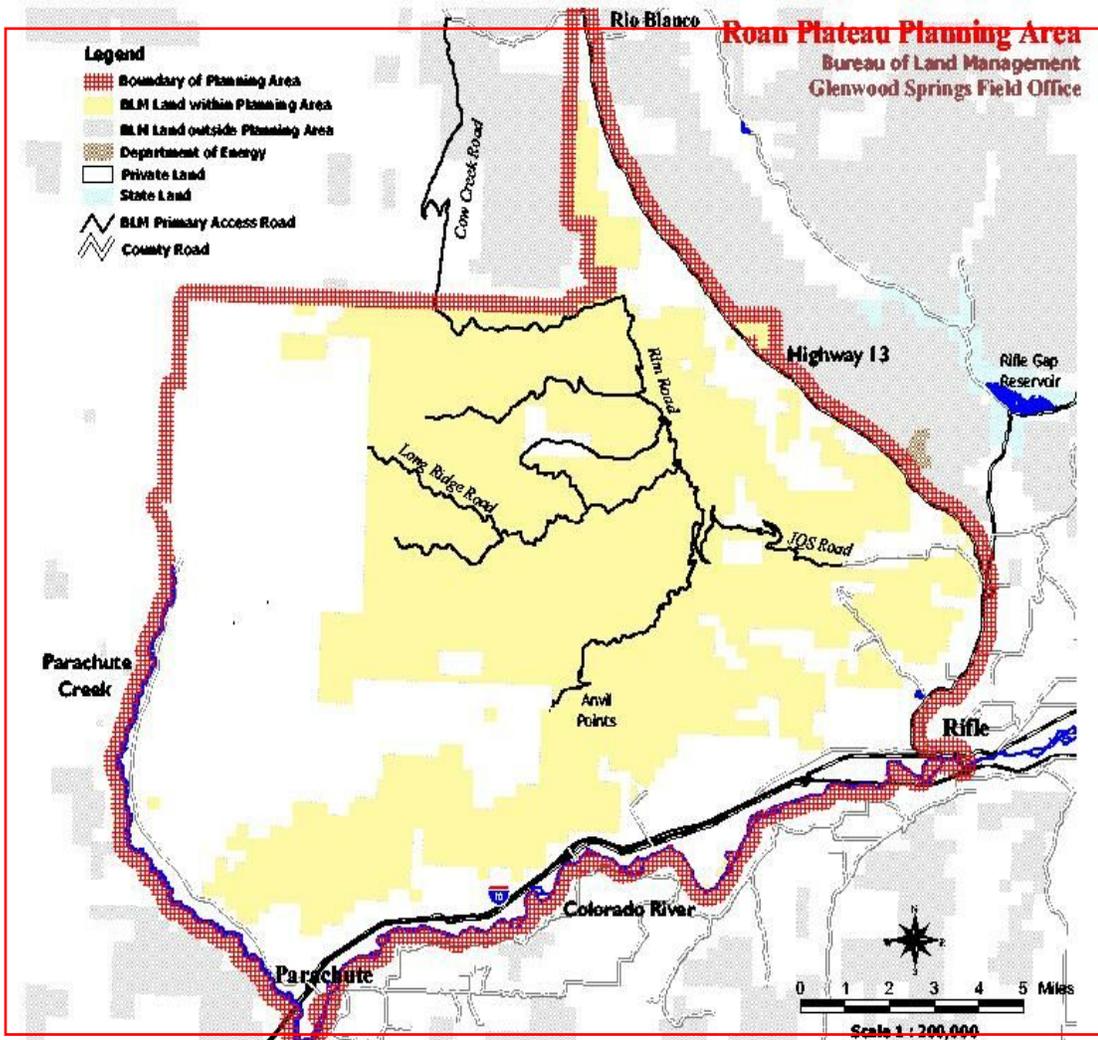
provided horses for early settlers who worked to improve bloodlines and harvested stock each fall for sale. Grazing of sheep and cattle began prior to 1882 and early roads date from at least the mid-1880's.

East Parachute Creek, was the setting for early events of the Range Wars of the late 1800's. There, cattlemen drove sheep over cliffs, near East Fork Falls, in a dispute over grazing.

Beginning in 1935 the Roan Plateau area was referred to as the Naval Oil Shale Reserve (NOSR) and fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Navy. In 1977, DOE assumed jurisdiction under the DOE Organization Act.

A Memorandum of Understanding was approved between DOE and DOI/BLM in 1987 that outlined BLM's and DOE's surface management and funding roles.

Finally in 1997, Public Law 105-85 directed the transfer of jurisdiction of the area formerly known as the NOSR, from the DOE to the BLM. The transfer directed that the lands be managed in accordance with laws applicable to public lands, including the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act.



Planning Issues Summary

This summary was derived during scoping from input provided by the public, other agencies, interest groups and the Roan Plateau planning team. The planning process will largely focus on the primary issues and related topics.

<p>Primary Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil and Gas Development • Wilderness and Roadless Areas • Recreational Opportunities • Travel and Transportation • The Influences of Changing Population, Growth and Development to Public Lands • Fish and Wildlife Habitat • Livestock Grazing Management • Visual Aesthetics • Economic Benefits from Gas Leasing, Grazing, Recreation and/or Tourism • Ecological Richness/Uniqueness/Diversity
<p>Related Topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watershed / Water Resources / Water Pollution • Vegetation / Forest Management • Air Quality • Local Quality of Life / Livelihoods • Loss of Traditional Uses and Activities • Maintaining the Current Activities, Setting and Management • Areas/Routes Open for Motorized Use, Mountain Bikes/Seasonal Restrictions • Protection of Rare and Sensitive Species • Protection of Natural Features • Protection of Paleontological / Archeological Resources • Wildland Fire and Prescribe Fire Management • Conflicts Between Users • Rights-of-Ways, Communication Sites, Utility Corridors • Reclamation of Un-needed Routes, Improvements, and Human Impacts • Meeting Land Health Standards • Livestock Grazing Carrying Capacity and Conflicts • Soils / Erosion • Reclamation of Spent Shale Pile and Dept. of Energy Facilities
<p>Related Implementation Topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting Trails to Rifle • Level of Maintenance on Routes • Recreational Facilities • Signing • Litter and Trash Dumping • Livestock Distribution and Improvements • Enforcement of Regulations • Gas Development Spacing, Directional Drilling and Stipulations • Partnerships / Involving Users in Implementation • Habitat Improvement Projects • Gas Development Mitigation
<p>Related Planning Topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfirming Existing RMP Decisions • Multiple-Use Management • Increased and Changing Demands of Public Lands • Sustainability • Cumulative Impact of Gas Development • Balance of Recreational Opportunities • Intent of Transfer Legislation • Need to Revise Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario for Gas Leasing

Purpose and Need of the Planning Process

This planning effort's **purpose** is to establish an integrated guiding plan for future site specific analysis and decisions that maintains or improves existing conditions to meet or exceed Colorado BLM Land Health Standards.

The **need** is to follow Public Law 105-85 which directed the new public lands be managed in accordance with the Federal

Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and other laws applicable to public lands.

To meet this purpose, GSFO will make decisions about particular activities, including where they will allow those activities and under what circumstances. BLM decisions about the compatibility of human activities with existing

conditions will reflect reasonably foreseeable benefits and dis-benefits. This includes economic, ecological and social aspects associated with significant activities and possible management designations; gas leasing, recreation activities, wilderness proposals or tourism.



Snowmobilers enjoy Roan Plateau Trails

Steps in the Process

Roan Plateau Area Planning Schedule	Dates
Initiate RMP amendment process - publish public notices	Nov. 2000
Begin Scoping - Open House & Scoping period through Jan 31, 2001	Nov. 2000- Jan. 2001
Fieldwork to fill data gaps/resolve new issues identified during scoping process (Land Health Assessments, Cultural surveys, Hubbard Mesa route inventory, Preliminary oil & gas fieldwork.)	Apr.- Sept. 2001
Finish Preparation Plan	Aug. 2001
<i>We are Here</i>	Nov. 2001
Develop/publish planning criteria – 30 day public comment period	
Complete affected environment portion of EIS	Thru Feb. 2002
Formulate Alternatives / Estimation of the effects of the alternatives	Thru Aug. 2002
Complete Draft EIS – Selection of the Preferred Alternative	Sept. 2002
Review and approval by State Director	Oct. 2002
Publish draft plan amendments DEIS – 90 Day Comment Period	Nov. 2002- Jan. 2003
Analyze comments, revise EIS, internal review	Mar. – Apr. 2003
Publish Final EIS - Governor’s Consistency Review – (60 day review) - Public Notice - Protest period (30 day review)	May - June 2003
Protest Resolution & Prepare Record of Decision	July 2003
Amendment Approved by SD	Aug. 2003

Why Now?

Why is the Roan Plateau Area planning effort of such importance? Why is it receiving more than usual attention at the national level?

The planning effort for the Roan Plateau is receiving close attention because of local and national concerns. Land use plans are the basis for



every action the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) takes in the field. The BLM's process of crafting a land use plan serves as a principle means for the public to participate in BLM land and resource management decisions.

With an up-to-date plan, the BLM can ensure the integrity and sustainability of resources while also ensuring public opportunities for their use and enjoyment. Many of the BLM's current land use plans are 15-20 years old and do not address more recent concerns such as critical habitats for threatened or endangered species, noxious weed invasions, or new legal mandates.

In February 2000, the BLM reported to Congress short-term and long-term needs regarding BLM's 162 land use plans. The BLM asked for funds to address the following

high priority needs:

Address oil and gas issues in WY, NM, UT, CO and MT; Prepare land use plans for 12 National Monuments and National Conservation Areas; Prepare plans for 6 military ranges; and Prepare or revise 11 Resource Management Plans.

Congress provided the requested funds. The BLM must now revise the associated land use plans to provide comprehensive guidance for sustainable management of public lands. Congress, the President's Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of the Interior expect that the work will be accomplished in a timely manner so BLM staff is not tied up in planning work for years. The GSFO staff looks forward to devoting more time to the on-the-ground work of managing public lands.

Completing the Roan Plateau Area Resource Management Plan Amendment in a timely and public manner is now a high priority. The BLM considers the effort *time-sensitive* because it addresses BLM priority needs, nationally significant issues, and vulnerable, sensitive, and at-risk resources. Your help now can ensure the BLM makes a timely and appropriate decision.

Without up-to-date plans, the BLM can neither ensure the integrity and sustainability of resources nor assure their use and enjoyment by the public.

What Has Happened So Far in the Process?

Public lands have friends and neighbors and the Roan Plateau area is no different. The GSFO is committed to conducting our land planning and management activities in an open manner, working with immediate neighbors and distant friends alike.

In October of 2000 the GSFO, through the US Forest Service Collaboration Service Team, conducted five small group discussions regarding the Roan Plateau area with stakeholders. Four small group discussions were held with a



Parachute Canyon

diverse group of mostly local residents and the other small group discussion was with the GSFO staff.

This initial *community of interest* assessment gave

BLM a starting point for an open discussion about the Roan Plateau area and began the work of ensuring that the planning process reflected a good understanding of how different people view the Roan Plateau area. BLM gained insight into the concerns, ideas, and thoughts of stakeholders while the participants gained a shared understanding of the planning area. The goal is to develop a partnership capable of realizing a shared vision.

The planning process was formally initiated in November

2000 with a notice in the Federal Register. To launch the public participation process, invitation letters were mailed to known stakeholders and the GSFO worked with the local media to inform the public at large. A well-attended open house was held in Rifle, Colorado in December 2000 at the beginning of the scoping period which concluded in January 2001.

During the summer of 2001, the GSFO staff completed the necessary pre-planning fieldwork including; a route inventory of the lowlands, the remaining land health assessments and a cultural inventory of the Hubbard Mesa area.

Planning Criteria

Planning criteria let interested people and the planning team know the important considerations guiding the overall planning process, the range of reasonable alternatives, and the estimate of analysis necessary to address the planning issues.

The Roan Plateau area planning criteria were derived from a variety of sources including: applicable laws and regulations, the existing land use plan, coordination of programs of other agencies, and the results of public participation.

The planning criteria may be updated and changed as planning proceeds based on pub-

lic suggestions and the findings of any studies and assessments.

The BLM makes draft planning criteria available for public review for 30 days before approving them for use. This gives the public time to review the planning criteria, comment on their adequacy, and suggest changes. The GSFO is interested in your thoughts on the following draft planning criteria. Please send any suggestions by December 3, 2001 to: Bureau of Land Management; Roan Plateau Area Planning Process; P.O. Box 1009; Glenwood Springs, CO; 81602.

The draft planning criteria are as follows:

Area of analysis:

1. The planning process will address the newly transferred public lands (formerly the Naval Oil Shale Reserves 1 and 3) and the adjacent BLM administered public lands generally located between Parachute Creek, Highway 13 and the Colorado River, totaling approximately 73,000 acres;

Decisions carried forward:

2. Develop Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenarios that utilize, at a minimum, stipulations developed in the Oil and Gas Leasing and Development FSEIS of Jan. 1999;

Decisions to be made:

3. Review the validity of the Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenario for the Production Area (NOSR 3) made in the Oil and Gas Leasing and Development FSEIS of Jan. 1999 and determine if a new RFD is necessary;

4. Establish a new RFD scenario for the planning area that includes; the un-leased transferred lands (NOSR 1), the Production Area (NOSR 3), and the remaining public lands within the planning area;

5. Establish travel designations that replace interim travel designations on transferred lands and affirm or change travel designa-

(Continued on page 7)

Upcoming Public Participation Opportunities:
DATE:
December 12, 2001

TIME:
3:30 pm - 7:30 pm

LOCATION:
Rifle Fire Station
 1850 Railroad Ave.
 Rifle, Colorado.

TOPIC:
Helping the BLM Develop Alternatives.



Planning Criteria (continued)

tions on lands in the rest of the planning area;

6. Establish conservation measures for all species listed as Sensitive, Candidate, Proposed, Threatened, and Endangered in order to prevent the listing of Sensitive, Candidate, and Proposed Species and to conserve species currently listed as Threatened and Endangered under the Endangered Species Act (see Aug. 30, 2000, Interagency MOA for Programmatic Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation);

7. Consider if additional measures (see GSFO Oil and Gas Leasing and Development FSEIS of 1999) may be necessary to reduce undesirable effects of surface disturbing activities to acceptable levels;

8. Decide on the designation of special management areas including: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Recreation Management Areas;

9. Evaluate Wilderness Study Area designation for lands the BLM’s administrative wilderness inventory process determined to contain wilderness values (as per Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 U.S.C. 1131(c)).

10. Consider maintaining current character and naturalness on lands within the *Conservationists’ Wilderness Proposal for BLM* (see IM-CO-97-044 and IM-CO-96-01).

11. Use recommendations and information from land health

assessments (H-4180-1 - Land Health Standards) to develop direction that enhances or restores physical function and biological health and achieves Land Health Standards at the watershed scale.

Process Criteria of Note (from federal law or regulation):

12. Provide for a balance and diversity of resource uses while realizing that some uses may not be compatible nor offered within the Roan Plateau area (Federal Land Policy And Management Act of 1976);

13. Address options about managing the land and its resources with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return

(Federal Land Policy And Management Act of 1976);

14. Recognize valid existing rights (FLPMA);

15. Use multiple geographic scales, that may differ from the planning area for analysis, appropriate to specific resources and to address complex issues;

16. Consider budget when analyzing the feasibility of implementation.



BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office
50629 Hwys 6 & 24
P.O. Box 1009
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602.



Glenwood Springs Field Office
50629 Hwys 6 & 24
P.O. Box 1009
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

Address Label

We would like to hear from you.

----- *Perforated line here* -----

If you have comments about the BLM's Roan Plateau Area planning effort, please send your comments to:
BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office, 50629 Hwys 6 & 24, P.O. Box 1009 Glenwood Springs, CO 81602.

We are interested in your thoughts concerning the newsletter, public participation and the planning process.

Newsletter

1) Was this newsletter informative? How could we make it better?

Public Participation

2) How best can we keep you involved  informed?



3) As a participant in the Roan Plateau planning process, what additional information would be useful to you that could be included in a future newsletter or placed on the Roan Plateau web page or provided at the next public meeting?

4) What would you like to see the BLM do to make this planning effort timely and worthwhile for you?

Planning

5) What about the Roan Plateau area today is most important to have in the future, or avoid changing? Why? 

6) What would you like to see changed in the Roan Plateau area ? Why? How?